3:Stanna· D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

754 Resident Magistrate at Blantyre, told me of a case where the grave of a well-known European hunter was opened and his trigger finger removed, the reason being obvious. The same thing is said to have occurred in regard to the heart of a brave man. In the former case the finger was probably worn as a charm; in the latter, the heart partly eaten and partly made into medicine. I have found human fingers and skulls among the outfits of witch-doctors. Such practices seem akin to those of cannibalistic societies found in other parts of Africa.

754 266 [575] 266 The natives insist that *vanumi* are banded together in some sort of society. There are numerous discrepancies in the evidence brought forward about *vanumi*, but such would necessarily arise and they do not, therefore, disprove the general belief in the actuality of *vanumi*. Be that as it may, it seems probable that though there may be little or no cannibalism at the present day, the beliefs about *vanumi* have arisen in consequence of common cannibalistic practices in the past. There are individual cases of cannibalism well known and one has only to call to mind that of Kantukule of Malemya's village. This man more or less openly killed and ate a number of people. On one occasion after a fight, he was seen looking over the dead bodies of the slain foes and in answer to an enquirer, he denied that he wanted any spoils but said he was just marking the bodies, "that would be his share." Later on, his own son, who tells the story, brought an Angoni man into the village who wished to settle under Malemya. It was evening, so he was introduced into his father's (Kantukule's) house where Kantukule gave him food and later a mat on which to sleep, the son meanwhile having gone to a beer drinking. In the morning, he returned to take his Angoni friend to the chief, but his father said he had gone away. Entering the hut, however, the son came upon the Angoni's snuff-box, and said to his father, "No Angoni would go away and leave his snuff-box." But the father said, "Well, he has gone." The lad being suspicious again went into the hut and found the place where the Angoni had been sleeping drenched with blood. Going out again, he noticed blood dripping through the bottom of Kantukule's grain-store and looking inside, he found the body.

This man Kantukule was a great friend of the reigning Malemya's headwife, Kang'ombe; after the death of Malemya and after his wives had passed to the present Malemya, circumstances arose in the village which cast suspicion on Kantukule and the woman. One of two brothers was ill and, it appeared afterwards, that the woman had said to Kantukule, "Won't you finish him off?" It is supposed that Kantukule thought she meant the brother who was not sick; for it so happened that both died the same night. It was supposed they were killed in order that Kantukule and the woman, his friend, might eat them. Malemya had the woman turned out of the village. She now lives near Zomba and has once come under my care. The man, who was also turned out, took up his abode near a highway where he is reported to have killed several Angoni porters whom he said he poisoned, because "being travellers far away from their homes, no one would bother about them."

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

The father of one of my servants helped to clear out the remains of a body from his grain store on one occasion and shortly afterwards, it is supposed that his own sons who had said they could not allow it to go on any longer, employed some one to kill him, as he was found, one day, with his head smashed in. There are, I believe, a number of similar cases known.

A person is supposed to gain the powers of *nsoni* by procuring medicine from some one willing to sell his secrets at a price, and by performing certain rites usually connected with his method of bathing. It is said that "such and such a one takes his bath on the top of an ant hill" or "on the roof of his house by moonlight." The usual initiation into *nsoni* is a long business, the individual being successively initiated into all the various practices of *ukoma*, the supernatural. Medicines are made from a still-born child, from various plants, from the hyaena, etc., and used for preparing the individual in the new science. He is introduced to the hyaena, the fox, etc. It is also asserted that a man may acquire supernatural powers by having sexual intercourse with a *near* relative, a sister or mother. I have had pointed out to me an old man who is said to have wished thus to acquire power but the woman refused and he has been a laughing-stock ever since.

On one occasion, a man related to me the pathetic life story of his attempt to find his favorite sister who, like himself, had been taken away to the coast as a slave. In desperation he has adopted the above procedure to try to gain supernatural powers to help him but without result. It would therefore seem to be a method not particularly associated with *nsoni*.

The *nsoni* is supposed to bring about the death of his victim not by administering poison or other such direct means, but by the more subtle mode of making medicine "against" him. When the victim has succumbed and is in due course buried, the *nsoni* arrives at the grave to secure that for which he has been working. To the *nsoni* is attributed the power of making himself invisible, and of taking the form of an animal; owing to the carrion-eating habits of the hyaena, *this animal forms he most commonly takes.* Other animal forms which are associated with the *nsoni* are the leopard, the fox, and the owl, all night-going animals. The Yao say, "The cry of the fox (jackal) is heard at night because he associates with *nsoni* doings."

Arrived at the grave after sunset, the *nsoni* blows his horn, the horn of a small antelope, to call his brethren; a fire with a blue flame is made by the grave and around it they dance, or the grave may be illuminated by blue flame without a visible fire. The *nsoni* calls upon the deceased to rise from the grave, addressing him by the name he bore before he was initiated, i.e. his child-name. Obeying the summons, the dead man rises to the surface of the ground, though how he comes out is not quite clear —" the hole may be over so small. The risen dead is then killed again by magic medicine and his body divided to be eaten by the congregation of *nsoni*. It is said that the skull is made into a gourd, the eyes are used as beads, and the ribs formed into a girdle.